

Epiphany 2 -January 15, 2023  
Text: John 1:29-42a  
Theme: What Are You Seeking?

**As we move into the Epiphany season, we will begin to see what it means for us that the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, took on human flesh and blood, that is, became incarnate. The fact that Jesus is fully human and fully God has important implications for us. Christmas is the season in which we celebrate this incarnation but Epiphany is the season in which we learn what the incarnation means for us long term.**

**For one thing, because Jesus, fully God, is also fully human, we have a conduit straight to God the Father. We do not need a prophet or a priest to speak to God for us as people did in the Old Testament. We can speak directly to God the Father anytime we desire. That is huge. Imagine being able to pick up the phone and talk to President Biden, or King Charles or Pope Francis anytime you had something to say. You can do that with God! But prayer is harder for some people than for others. I hear people tell me frequently that they have not been able to pray. Maybe they think that they don't know how to pray. Maybe they think prayer doesn't do any good so why bother? Maybe they think God, if there is a god, wouldn't care to hear from them anyway because they have been so sinful. But they are so wrong on all counts, and that is very sad for them. By refusing to**

**pray or giving up on prayer, they are passing up one of God's great gifts to us. God cares about what we want. He cares about our needs. He cares about our fears and worries whether justified or not. He has made it patently clear that He wants to hear from us constantly.**

**When John the Baptist's disciples went to Jesus, Jesus asked them, "what are you seeking?" That was an invitation to prayer to them and to us. Now they blew it and asked something dumb (where are you staying?) but the invitation was there nonetheless. That is exactly what Jesus says to each one of us, "What are you seeking?" Don't blow it! Don't act coy. The God of the universe is asking for your input! I know full well that you have opinions about every single thing in the universe from who should run the country to what flavor the communion wine should be and He is asking to hear from you. Well? What are YOU seeking?**

**I think that we could all think of something to do on Sunday morning besides this, so you must be seeking something if you are here. One of the most helpful things I learned when I was working on a counseling degree was that a person always feeds his needs. It is rare that we just do something haphazardly. Human beings, by nature, seek to feed their needs. So, if you are in church, there is some need you are seeking to fill. What is it? Are you trying to look**

**more upstanding by being in church? Are you trying to appease your spouse, or parents by being in church? Or is there a deeper reason? Are you seeking to commune with God? To cry out to him in your need and hear His words of promise and comfort to you?**

**Many people bemoan the reality that there are fewer and fewer people coming to church these days. That's not just us. In fact, the LCMS is doing better than all the other mainline Protestant churches and the Roman Catholics. But none of us would count our church attendance as a victory. We're dying slower than you doesn't seem to be much of a victory cry. The reality is that fewer and fewer people consider it important to be in church on a weekly basis. The covid shutdown did us no favors because many people got used to staying home on Sunday mornings and we all know that a bad habit is easy to form and hard to break. But I think the heart of the matter is that people have no confidence in prayer because almost everything we do in worship is prayer. It is either us speaking to God or God speaking to us.**

**The Lord of life looks right at you this morning and asks, "What are you seeking?" People pay hundreds of dollars to be in the presence of musical performers and athletes. They spend millions of dollars every year on pornography. They spend hours upon hours sitting in front of the television and I wonder, what are we seeking?**

**What need are we trying to fill? Pleasure? Excitement? A sense of importance or prestige? Whatever it is, I know it is nothing lasting. It is nothing of ultimate necessity.**

**What am I seeking? I want to find a way to communicate to all the people who skip worship every week what they are missing. When a friend tells me about how great a restaurant is, I want to go and try it. When one of my kids tells me about an amazing movie they watched, I want to watch it. Perhaps we can do likewise with church. Could we be like Andrew and tell everyone we see that we have found the Lord and He wants to know what you are seeking. What need do you have? Do you want healing? Do you need money or work? Do you need help with a relationship? This is the place to come. Jesus wants to know what you want. What are you seeking? And He will give you what you need. Not necessarily what you want, but He will give you what you need.**

**The disciples blew it and asked something unimportant. "Where are you staying?" Who cares? What does that matter? No doubt, we too have been like the disciples and frittered away our time with Jesus. Maybe we have slept through His Word. Maybe we have chit chatted in the Trinity Center instead of attending to worship. Maybe we have mentally made our list of stuff we need to get done instead of participating in the prayers. We have all**

**frittered away time that we could have spent with Jesus. But look at what Jesus says to the goofy disciples who have just used their moment to ask where he is staying.**

**“Come and you will see.” That is what He says to us as well. Come and you will see. The best news of the incarnation of Christ is that this is a marathon, not a sprint. He is here for the long haul and He is patient with us as we slowly grow into this new and strange relationship He has created with us. He took on human flesh so that He could die on the cross in our place but not just so He could die in our place but also that He could live eternally as one of us. He is with us now and forever and invites us to come and see. When Danya and I would go visit Mamaw Douglass, as we were leaving, she would always say, “Come and see me now!” Danya and I would get in the car and laugh because we had just seen her! But I think she was saying more than to come and physically see her. She was inviting us to continue in an ongoing relationship with her beyond our occasional visits. I think Jesus says the same to us. “Come and see me now! Be in an ongoing relationship with me and I will show you more than you even know is possible and I will give you more than you even know that you want.”**